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The world's best video diarists

Bloggers have moved into a new dimension - streaming video. Tomas Rawlings logs on to find the cream of the crop

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Rocketboom

<http://www.rocketboom.com/vlog/>

The vblog that everybody is talking about. Based in New York, Rocketboom is a professional production that offers a daily story over five days a week on a whole range of cultural, arts and technology issues. It is a convergence of blogging and the evening news. It has its own anchor, correspondents in various US cities as well as a couple in Europe. It distributes its content over the net via video streaming, uses peer-to-peer technology (via BitTorrent), is PlayStation Portable compatible and is good! This is new, new media and not to be missed.

Future Media <http://future-mediavt.blogspot.com/>

Future Media is the work of new-media video journalists. It's been going only a few months but already has notched up a pretty impressive array of videos featuring various internet and technology industry professionals talking about their subject at length. Its subject matter very much evangelises new media but is a great way to access technology news in full as opposed to the few sound-bites that normally appear on TV. The Mac-orientated site's videos are in QuickTime, though there is support offered for Windows.

The 05 Project

<http://www.noservicecharge.com/video/>

This vblog is a work of pure effort - this project aims to post a video blog for every single day of 2005. No mean feat, and its UK creator Ian Mills is well on the way to achieving this Herculean task (plus he offers video in both QuickTime and Windows Media Player formats). As for the content itself, the videos vary in quality from funny to dry but are more often than not witty slices of his life. In the words of the vblog's creator: "I'm sure out of 365 videos some of them will suck. It's not like you pay to watch them anyway." Good point.

Vlog-Flux

<http://fluxrostrum.blogspot.com/>

The experience of hitting the campaign trail in 2003 to cover the presidential election for the radical candidate Dennis Kucinich gave Vlog-Flux the road trip bug. Since then he has given up his life in LA to travel the US, "to document the end of the façade of democracy". This site shows how the predominately one-way dialogue between the media and the audience is eroding fast. The videos are well produced and edited and the vblog is packed full of news, links, images and information, and frequently bites back at mainstream media coverage of events.

Fastmovinganimals

<http://www.fastmovinganimals.blogspot.com/>

A young but promising vblog. This is the work of a London-based filmmaker, and shows another facet of what can be done with a vblog - experiment. Vblogs are a great way of getting an audience to watch short films for no other reason than to watch short films. Each QuickTime film is a tiny artistic peek into another world. The production quality is good and the use of effects and audio is striking. More information on the how and why of each video would improve the vblog, but the current content is enough to warrant its inclusion in this list.

Mobuzz TV Magazine

<http://www.mobuzztv.com/>

This vblog represents another important technological and cultural shift in the media - its starting platform for production is a mobile phone. Consciously positioning itself outside the mainstream media, it attempts not to repackage cultural/celebrity magazine shows to a smaller screen, but to work to a new mobile/vblog/web aesthetic. That's not to say it is all fluff and throwaway celeb interviews - the news report on the London bombings was a heartfelt and insightful piece delivered with poise by its presenter, Iria Gallardo.

BENched

<http://jaguarfan888.blogspot.com/>

The diary of self-confessed dork and jock rolled into one, Ben Avilez from Vista, California. This vblog shows how well the medium can be used to give an insight into one person's perspective. The Windows Media Player clips are very rough, with harsh editing and poor sound quality, but that's part of the charm. This is very personal vblogging and is akin to the BBC's video diaries, except with no producer between you and the subject. This is the reality of the iPod generation - and this is its Adrian Mole.

29fragileddays

<http://29fragileddays.blogspot.com/>

Like Fast Moving Animals, this is another UK-based arty video site. The site has interesting features that enhance the feel of the content - such as the text that gradually shrinks away as you scroll down the chronology of posts. The comments posted with each entry reinforce the media content and give a sense of purpose to the work. The posts - both Flash (which is rare for a vblog) as well as QuickTime - are excellent and thought-provoking. This site gives the viewer a personal video installation with each entry.

Kong is King

<http://www.kongisking.net/kong2005/>

This is the video production diary of the new Peter Jackson remake of King Kong, and is the best of a number of similar vblogs. It is obviously a marketing tool, but if you are one of those people who buy DVDs to see the deleted scenes and director's commentary, this site is for you. As you would expect, the quality of video is excellent and it is fun to be able to peek into the set to see skull-like props and bursts of flame as the crew beaver away. Expect to see much more of this type of vblog.

Vlog Map

<http://www.vlogmap.org/>

Nowheresville, USA

<http://nowheresville.us/medi.php>

This well-crafted site is the work of Danish-born Michael Cossarwal. His vblog consists of very short, tiny (frame size) clips (normally a few seconds) seemingly pulled straight from his imagination. His delivery of chat-up lines in Spanish with English subtitles under the title "how to succeed with the ladies" is typical of its quirky style. The films are quick to load, which is important given that many people are not using broadband and so would find most vblogs inaccessible. Witty and charming.

Drinking with Bob

<http://drinkingwithbob.blogspot.com/>

Bob is an angry 29-year-old New Yorker who has things to say. The site is a rantathon on the state of the world today. Bob delivers slices of QuickTime anger as he shouts at the camera. Typical content: "Shaun P Diddy Puff Daddy Combs changes his nickname and this is newsworthy, the news reported this. I never heard of anyone in the world changing their own nickname, OK, a nickname is something that somebody else gives to you. You don't make up your own nickname, stupid..." Have a stiff drink handy.